



NEWS RELEASE

OFFICE OF THE UNITED STATES ATTORNEY
WESTERN DISTRICT OF MISSOURI

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

UPDATE: PROJECT CEASEFIRE
**TWO FELONS SENTENCED, ANOTHER PLEADS GUILTY
FOR ILLEGAL POSSESSION OF FIREARM**

KANSAS CITY, Mo. – Todd P. Graves, United States Attorney for the Western District of Missouri, announced that two felons were sentenced and another pleaded guilty in federal court, in separate and unrelated cases, today for illegally possessing firearms. Today's sentencings and conviction, Graves said, mark additional progress under Project Ceasefire, the district's ongoing anti-crime initiative.

* **Sylvester Cornelius**, 23, of Kansas City, Mo., was sentenced by U.S. District Judge Scott O. Wright this morning to seven years in federal prison without parole.

On Aug. 21, 2003, **Cornelius** pleaded guilty to being a felon in possession of a firearm. By pleading guilty, **Cornelius** admitted that he was in possession of a Rohm-GMBH .38 caliber revolver on Jan. 20, 2003. Under federal law, Graves explained, it is illegal for any felon to be in possession of any firearm or ammunition. **Cornelius** has four 2000 criminal felony convictions for narcotics distribution.

Cornelius was originally charged with being a felon in possession of a firearm in an indictment returned by a federal grand jury on March 11, 2003.

This case was prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Linda L. Sybrant. It was investigated by the Kansas City, Mo., Police Department and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives.

* **Eric S. Cross**, 30, of Independence, Mo., also known as Cecil Ryder, was sentenced by U.S. District Judge Gary A. Fenner this morning to two years in federal prison without parole.

On Aug. 8, 2003, **Cross** pleaded guilty to being a felon in possession of a firearm. By

pleading guilty, **Cross** admitted that he was in possession of an Omega .22 caliber revolver on April 1, 2003. Under federal law, Graves explained, it is illegal for any felon to be in possession of any firearm or ammunition. **Cross** has a 1999 criminal felony conviction for passing a bad check and a 2000 criminal felony conviction for possession of a controlled substance.

Cross was originally charged with being a felon in possession of a firearm in an indictment returned by a federal grand jury on June 18, 2003.

This case was prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Jess Michaelson. It was investigated by the Kansas City, Mo., Police Department and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives.

* **Randy Keffer**, 34, of Butler, Mo., pleaded guilty before U.S. District Judge Howard F. Sachs this afternoon to being a felon in possession of a firearm.

By pleading guilty, **Keffer** admitted that he was in possession of a SWD Cobray 9 mm M-11 pistol and an IAB 45/70 rifle on July 8, 2002. Under federal law, Graves explained, it is illegal for any felon to be in possession of any firearm or ammunition. **Keffer** has three 1994 criminal felony convictions for stealing and burglary.

Keffer was originally charged with being a felon in possession of a firearm in an indictment returned by a federal grand jury on Aug. 21, 2003.

This case was prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Jess E. Michaelson. It was investigated by the Bates County, Mo., Sheriff's Department and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives.

Project Ceasefire

Project Ceasefire, launched in October 1999, is a cooperative initiative by federal and local law enforcement and the Kansas City Crime Commission that targets for federal prosecution persons who unlawfully use or possess firearms.

This news release, as well as additional information about the office of the United States Attorney for the Western District of Missouri, is available on-line at

www.usdoj.gov/usao/mow